

# Fairford Flyer

## Extra No 24

February 2021 (1)

FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY

We hope you are enjoying these online newsletters. If anyone has anything they would like to contribute or have any local history questions please email [enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk)

### Betty Shaw

It was with great sadness we learned death of Mrs Shaw. As a newcomer to Fairford (20 years) I didn't know her well, but we always chatted when we met. She had been a member of Fairford History Society since 2004 when it started and always took an interest in FHS and also in the Fairford Preservation Trust (now Fairford Community Voice) which her husband Dr Charlton Shaw founded in the 1960s. She could certainly tell some tales of 'old Fairford'.

One memory was that she donated to FHS a large purple piece of material said to be the handkerchief of John Keble. The only doubt of it being a handkerchief is that it is rather large and we wondered if it might have been a ceremonial item. It is one of FHS's proudest possessions.



### Readers' letters

#### Update on Magpies Farm from the Peacheys

The original porch was driven into by an American and knocked down. The Meysey Hampton Village fete used to be held there; Alma Swann's mother would stand in the road with a white flag to stop the traffic while moving cows across the road. Frank Townsend used to farm the land. Riders used to come from far and wide to the Meet, the horses were tethered outside while the huntsmen and women went inside for a drink.

Andrew Hoskins from New Zealand painted this picture on a tour of his home area in 2009. From *Around Fairford through Time*

### Sayings

Edwin Cuss is very disappointed that there has been no feedback on 'old sayings'. I have found one from June Lewis's notebooks:- 'Faringdon Jack was a big tall man rough and swarthy on old pony and trolley, he SHOUTED buy anything - rags, lead, iron, rabbit skins, it varied with the time of year. A saying in these parts 'Izooks as rough as Faringdon Jack'.

Has anyone heard of the **Pancake Bell**? apparently it was rung after the service on Shrove Tuesday but the custom died out after the World Wars - not sure if it was WW1 or WW2

### FAIRFORD VISITORS before 1800

#### John Leland (c.1503-1552)

Over the last 600 years Fairford has occasionally been mentioned in published account by antiquarians, topographers, diarists and travel writers. One of the earliest accounts is by John Leland, poet, antiquarian and manager of Henry VIII's royal libraries. Leland visited most parts of England

and Wales from 1540 to 1546 and probably visited Gloucestershire in 1542 during an extended tour of the West Country. Sir Edmund Tame the younger, grandson of John Tame, was still alive in 1542 although he was probably living in Rendcomb by then but his mother, Dame Elizabeth, lived in the Tame mansion until her death in 1545. Leland's voluminous notes made during his tours were first published in 1710 under the title '*The itinerary of John Leland the antiquary*'.

Leland's notes about Fairford are fairly brief. He calls Fairford a "praty [pretty] uplandisch Toune, and much of it longith with the Parsonage to Tewkesbyri Abbay". He then goes on to say "There is a fair Mansion Place of the Tames hard by the Chirch Yarde, buildid thoroughly by John Tame and Edmunde Tame. The backside whereof goith to the very Bridg of Fairford". Assuming that the town bridge has not been relocated since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century, this would appear to site the house of the Tames on or near the plot of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century Fairford House. Leland continues with basic information about the Tames of Fairford including a description of their tombs in St. Mary's church.

Leland states that the bridge at Fairford had four stone arches. He concludes with a description of the River Coln "Fairford Water risith a 5 Miles North North West from Fairford, and after rennith about a mile lower through Welleford Village, and about a mile lower as it were betwixt Welleford and St. John's Bridge goith into Isis." In fact today the Coln enters the Thames at the Roundhouse about two miles downstream from Whelford.

### **Anthony Wood (1632-1695)**

Another antiquarian, Anthony Wood of Oxford also made notes of his visits to Fairford. His travels are described in '*The life and times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, described by himself*' but not published until 1891. On 19 July 1660 he set out from Oxford to visit Meysey Hampton travelling to Fairford the next day before returning home on the 21<sup>st</sup>. His expences for the trip (presumably for food and lodging) amounted to just two shillings (about £10.50 in today's money).

Most of his comments on Fairford are about his visit to St. Mary's church where he was shown the stained glass windows by William Oldisworth. Like Leland before him, Wood describes the Tame's tombs and says that the inscribed brass plate on the top of John Tame's tomb and part of the brass inscription around the edge of the tomb were "taken away in the late war or rebellion and laid up in the vestry, because, forsooth, it savoured too much of popery". St. Mary's church was fortunate to escape the level of destruction visited on many English churches during the English Civil War and the Commonwealth period. Wood also states that the church had an organ loft "which hath been a tunable set of organs". As he writes in the past tense the organ had presumably been removed during the Puritanical purge of anything not according with their concept of worship.

On 28 April 1678 Wood visited Fairford again, this time while on his way from Oxford to Bath. Once again he describes John Tame's tomb and also mentions the windows and the missing organ. He also writes "Some think that the Georg Inn in Fairford was a chauntry house for priests to celebrate for the soules of the Tames in the parish church. There is the same effigies of a man cut in stone over the dore, as there is on the tower of the church, perhaps the effigies of one of the Tames."

### **Thomas Baskerville (c.1630-1700)**

In 1674, 1682-3 and (possibly) 1692 Thomas Baskerville, a topographer of Sunningwell, Berkshire (now Oxfordshire), made tours of Gloucestershire and adjacent counties. He must have visited Fairford in 1674 as he mentions it briefly in his book '*The description of towns, on the road from Faringdon to Bristow and other places*' published in 1681. He may have stayed in The Bull or one of the other several inns in the town as he wrote that there were "good inns to lodge" in the town. Like most visitors then and now, he viewed the stained glass windows which he greatly admired claiming

“For the effigies of saints in ancient painted glass you may see more in the church windows of Fairford than in the riding of many miles elsewhere”.

This article was inspired by the Eric Jones contribution on Thomas Baskerville ....

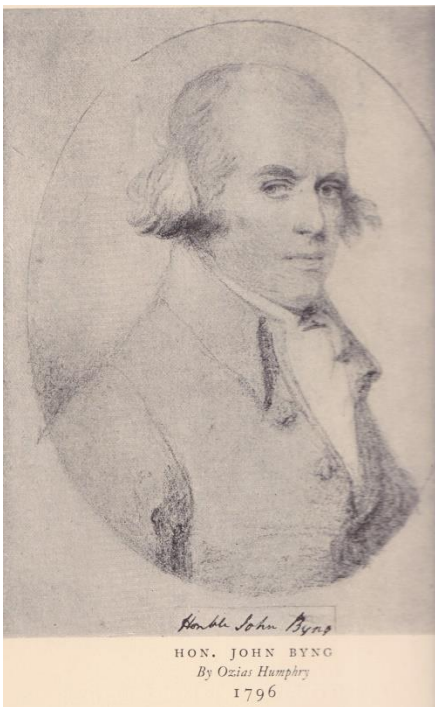
### **John Loveday (1711-1789)**

In 1732 John Loveday, antiquary, traveller and diarist, visited Fairford having met the Reverend Frampton Huntington, vicar of Fairford, in Oxford the previous year. The vicar told him that “Rendcomb, about eight or nine miles from Fairford, was the village which had the overplus of the glass, too much for Fairford windows; but he has been told ‘tis not comparable to theirs. Doubtless they put up the best”. The vicar also told John Loveday that Fairford offered to new-glaze the windows in Rendcomb church if they would let them have the 15<sup>th</sup> Century fragments back “for the sake of the colours, to mend their windows, but they refused though they have no compleat figure”. The Great Storm of 1703 badly damaged the three windows in the west end of St. Marys and much glass was lost, especially in Window 15, hence the request for Rendcomb’s glass.

Sir Edmund Tame, son of John Tame, is credited with the rebuilding of St. Peter’s church at Rendcomb around the year 1517 so it is quite possible that some glass originally intended for Fairford may have been surplus to requirements and used at Rendcomb. However, the only medieval glass left in Rendcomb church today is in a pane which has a monogram ‘E T’ commemorating Sir Edmund.

An account of Loveday’s travels can be found in the book ‘*John Loveday of Caversham 1711-1789: the life and tours of an Eighteenth Century onlooker*’ by S. Markham 1984.

### **The Honourable John Byng, 5<sup>th</sup> Viscount Torrington (1743-1813)**



Another 18<sup>th</sup> Century visitor is the diarist The Honourable John Byng who was created the 5<sup>th</sup> Viscount Torrington on 13 December 1812 but survived less than a month to enjoy his title. His legacy is the three-volume work ‘*The Torrington diaries*’ which record his extensive travels between 1781 and 1794. He visited Fairford on 24 July 1787 having ridden through Lechlade which he wrote is “a small market town, with nothing of curiosity in, or about it.” The obligatory visit was made to St. Mary’s church to view the windows and John Tame’s tomb as well as the “curious old stalls, discovering on their bottoms the same ludicrous carvings, that are so often found by me, to my great entertainment”. The ‘ludicrous’ misericords still entertain the visitors of today.

Byng continues “After a minute inspection I return’d to a good dinner of a trout, and cold boil’d beef rowl’d up as tho collar’d; and the people of the inn (the Bull) were so civil, that I wish’d to have made a longer stay with them; which indeed was very much prolonged by a walk thro’ the adjoining park to the house and gardens of Mrs Lambe. The old lady is blind, but her nephew Mr Raymond is carrying on many alterations and improvement of the park, and gardens, with the assistance of Mr Eames; a poor imitator of Brown’s capabilities”. The visitor then went on to criticise the siting of John Raymond’s newly-built kitchen garden and the position of the Broadwater which he thought was too far from the house. His tetchiness may have been due to the fact that he was shown through the hot houses but was not offered any fruit which seemed to upset him somewhat!

Illustration from the Torrington Diaries, Vol 1 Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1934

## **Fairford History – Month by Month**

### **From the Newspapers & other Records**

#### **100 Years ago this month**

At Fairford Childrens' Court on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1921 four boys, aged between 11 and 16 years, were summoned for doing wilful damage to gravestones in St. Mary's churchyard. Two gravestones had been pushed over, one of them had been broken off from its pedestal. The boys had been seen playing in the churchyard and Police Sergeant Hastings questioned them with the result that the youngest boy admitted that it was he who broke the cross as a result of being pushed by the older boys. The gravestones were the property of Miss Mary Keble of Keble House and the stone that was broken was that of her mother Mary Caroline Keble who had died on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1920 aged 88. She was the widow of the Reverend Thomas Keble, vicar of Bisley and nephew of the famous Reverend John Keble. The cross originally cost £12 and had been made by the stone mason Ashford George Farmer who offered to fix a new cross for £3 5 shillings.

The most surprising aspect of this incident is that the four boys involved were choir boys and were waiting to go into the church for a service. Apparently the vicar, Canon R C S Jones, would not allow his choir boys to enter the church until five minutes before the start of the service. So if the boys arrived early they had to wait outside until called for. The youngest boy was bound over to be on good behaviour for six months while the case against the other three was dismissed as they refused to admit culpability. Two of them even denied being in the churchyard at the time of the incident.

#### **200 Years ago this month**

In the Oxford Journal of the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1821 the following announcement appeared:  
"ANGLING - RICHARD HONEYBONE, CLOCK AND WATCH MAKER, and Vendor of all kinds of FISHING TACKLE, Fairford, begs leave to inform Gentlemen and his friends, that he has taken the fine TROUT STREAM at FAIRFORD, called the RIVER COLN, which abounds with excellent Trout, and which he intends preserving for Angling only. Tickets for the whole season, or for one day's amusement only, may be procured of R. Honeybone as above."

#### **300 Years ago this month**

During February 1721 the Reverend Frampton Huntington, vicar of Fairford, conducted four christenings, one burial but no marriages. One of the christenings was for Sarah, the daughter of John and Mary Harbert. The Harberts had been resident in Fairford since at least the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century when they were witnessing wills for their friends. There were three Harberts in Fairford, two butchers and a mercer, listed in the 1608 military survey of the able-bodied men in Gloucestershire. By the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the surname was usually written as Herbert.

#### **400 Years ago this month**

In February 1621 the Reverend Christopher Nicholson, the vicar of Fairford had a quiet month for services with just a single christening. John Watkins, the son of Nicholas and Anne was christened on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. He was the couple's only child recorded in the parish register although others could have been christened before 1617 when the surviving register was started by the vicar. John Watkins died aged 23 and was buried in the churchyard on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1644.